

DEVONSHIRE HOUSE SCHOOL



SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN (CHILD PROTECTION) POLICY  
September 2011

## **1. GENERAL**

The health, safety and well-being of all our pupils are of paramount importance to all the staff at Devonshire House. The children have the right to protection, regardless of age, gender, race, culture or disability. They have a right to be safe at school.

The School will always communicate readily with a local safeguarding agency whenever an allegation or disclosure of abuse has been made.

The school respects the pupils. The atmosphere within the school is one that encourages all children to respect one another. We provide opportunities that enable our children to take and make decisions for themselves.

The teaching of Personal, Social and Health Education, the teaching of personal values and morality in Religious Studies and issues raised in assemblies, all help to develop appropriate attitudes in our pupils and make them aware of the impact of their decisions on others. We also teach them how to recognise different risks in different situations, and how to behave in response to them.

We require all adults employed in school to have their application vetted through police records in order to ensure that there is no evidence of offences involving children or abuse.

## **2. AIMS**

This policy ensures that all staff in our school are clear about the actions necessary with regard to safeguarding children. Its aims are:

- to raise the awareness of all staff and identify responsibility in reporting possible cases of abuse
- to raise awareness in the children and equip them with the skills needed to keep them safe
- to ensure the safe recruitment of staff by checking suitability to work with children
- to develop and implement effective procedures for those who encounter an issue of child protection.
- to ensure effective confidentiality when dealing with child protection issues;
- to ensure that concerns are passed to the correct outside agency.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- All staff receive Safeguarding Children training every three years, and the Headmistress, as the designated person for Child Protection at least every two years.
- The PSHE curriculum covers health, safety, stranger danger, internet safety and other topics that equip the children with skills to keep them safe.
- The school follows all guidelines for safe recruitment and the Headmistress is trained in safer recruitment policy.
- The procedures in this policy are followed and any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay.
- The principals undertake an annual review of the School's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

### **3. CONFIDENTIALITY**

It is of the utmost importance that anyone concerned with a suspect case of abuse maintains confidentiality at all times on a “need to know” basis. The Headmistress, and in her absence the Deputy Head Academic and the relevant Deputy Head, should be informed under the arrangements in the paragraph below by the person suspecting abuse. The Headmistress and Deputy Head Academic will discuss who else should be informed within the school.

We regard all information relating to individual child protection issues as confidential, and we treat this accordingly. We only pass information on to appropriate persons. We inform the child at all stages of who is involved, and what information we have given them.

### **4. DESIGNATED PERSON**

The Headmistress is the designated person with status and authority to take responsibility for Child Protection matters and who has contact for liaison with the outside agencies in cases of suspected abuse. At times, she may designate this responsibility to the Deputy Head Academic for Upper School pupils or the Junior School Deputy Head, for Junior School pupils. All cases should therefore be referred to the Headmistress in the first instance, but in her absence to the Deputy Head Academic or the Junior School Deputy Head.

### **5. THE ROLE OF THE CLASS TEACHER AND OTHER ADULTS IN THE SCHOOL**

This school recognises that the class teacher is the first stage in the pastoral care of the child in the school. Teachers are well placed to observe outward signs of abuse, changes in behaviour or failure to develop or thrive. However any person, including the School Nurse, school secretaries, and Games teachers may well be the first that a child turns to, be the first to be aware of a child’s distress or notice unexpected bruising or injury.

All adults in the school should be aware of their duty of care to the children and should report any concerns to the Headmistress, and in her absence to the Deputy Head Academic or the Junior School Deputy Head. The Headmistress, Deputy Head Academic or the Junior School Deputy Head will investigate each matter on an individual basis.

## 6. GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

Staff must ensure that their behaviour and actions do not place pupils or themselves at risk of harm or of allegations of harm to a pupil.

The following guidelines should be followed:

- a) Subject and class teachers should only give one to one tuition after having permission from the Headmistress.
- b) One to one tuition should take place in a setting where the teacher and pupil can be observed by others. There should always be a glass panel in the door of the classroom and sufficient traffic passing the door to allow informal supervision. One to one tuition should never take place in a classroom after or before school where there is no other adult present nearby.
- c) If a member of staff has any indication that a child being taught, either one to one or otherwise, is bringing up inappropriate topics or behaving inappropriately then the Headmistress must be informed immediately. If this happens during a one to one session then the lesson should cease immediately.
- d) Instrumental Music teachers should pay particular attention to the above. Due to their relationship with their pupils it is also possible that an instrumental teacher may be the first to hear of a child's concerns or to suspect that they are being abused. Instrumental Music teachers must be sure to follow the procedures in the policy carefully.
- e) Children may be comforted when they are distressed but staff must avoid any inappropriate physical contact with children.
- f) Sports staff inevitably come into physical contact with children, but must ensure that this is only on a professional level e.g. adjusting the angle of a bowler's arm.
- g) Staff should not convey any pupil by car without permission from the Headmistress (e.g. to attend a sports fixture). Permission will not be granted for one teacher to convey one child.
- h) Staff must take care that the computers that they use in School have appropriate security settings. Pupils must not be at risk of seeing inappropriate images on the screen, even if they come into the classroom outside of lesson times. School computers must only be used for teaching and School administrative purposes.
- i) Staff must not make inappropriate contact with pupils, either current or ex-pupils by electronic methods.
- j) The following policy must be noted and carefully observed. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary proceedings and possible dismissal, with referral to the ISA (Independent Safeguarding Authority or similar body) or the police.

## 6.1 DEVONSHIRE HOUSE SCHOOL STAFF INTERNET GUIDANCE

All staff must keep themselves and the School safe, and maintain the School's good reputation at all times. They must be aware how their use of the internet could put this at risk and should follow the same e-safety guidelines that we give the children.

### SOCIAL NETWORKING:

However high you set your own privacy settings you are potentially vulnerable when you correspond with others who have not set their own security to the same level. Matters of concern are:

- Inappropriate pictures of staff
- Sending inappropriate images over the internet
- Sending inappropriately worded text or email messages relating to the school
- Pupils having access to private details of staff, thus rendering staff vulnerable to abuse

When using social networking groups such as 'Facebook', staff must ensure that:

- All settings give maximum privacy
- Personal details are kept to a minimum and the words 'Devonshire House' are not anywhere on your profile
- No photographs are on your profile / site that could be embarrassing if seen by colleagues, pupils or parents or could identify the School
- Any abuse is reported
  
- Any member of staff who is listed as a 'friend' to a current or previous pupil will be asked to attend a disciplinary meeting. It must be understood that this is to protect the reputation of members of staff and of the school.

### E-MAIL

- It is quite clear in the Staff handbook that any correspondence with parents must first be cleared by the Headmistress. This must include email or other internet correspondence.

### INTERNET

- Internally, the use of the internet at school is always monitored. Staff must not use networking websites when using a school computer. School facilities are intended for professional school use only.

## 7. POLICY IN CASES OF SUSPECTED CHILD ABUSE

### 7.1 CATEGORIES FOR CONCERN ARE:

**Neglect** - The failure to meet a child's basic physical and psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. It may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food, shelter and clothing, failure to ensure access to adequate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of a child's basic emotional needs.

**Physical Abuse** - Physical injury to a child, (including deliberate poisoning) where there is definite knowledge, or a reasonable suspicion, that the injury was inflicted or knowingly not prevented. 'Munchausen Syndrome by Proxy' may also constitute physical abuse.

**Sexual Abuse** - Forcing or enticing a child to take part in sexual activity, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may include physical contact, or non –contact activities such as involving children in looking at pornographic material or watching inappropriate videos or films, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Sexual abuse may also include cyberabuse** – Children who are active on the internet may find themselves in internet contact with inappropriate adults and this may lead to their being exposed to language, images and language of a sexual and adult nature.

**Emotional Abuse** - Persistent emotional ill-treatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on a child's emotional development. It also may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person. It may involve causing children to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of ill-treatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

Emotional Abuse may also include cyberbullying through email, internet or mobile telephone contact.

**Grave Concern** - Children whose situations do not currently fit the above categories but for whom there is significant risk of abuse.

## 7.2. INITIAL ACTIONS

a) Whenever any member of the school staff has reason to suspect that a pupil may have suffered abuse, the Headmistress, as Designated Child Protection officer, or in her absence the Deputy Head Academic or Junior School Deputy Head, **MUST** at once be informed.

b) If a child alleges abuse of any kind to a teacher, he or she should be given support and reassurance, but must not be promised confidentiality. The teacher or other adult should listen to what the child has to say, but avoid asking leading questions about the abuse, although they may ask questions about the child's feelings and general welfare. If possible they should make notes at the time, and should write a full report for the Headmistress to be given to her immediately.

c) Depending on age and circumstance, the child should be encouraged to make a detailed statement to no fewer than TWO adults. No time should be lost in this being done and it should ideally be made within 24 hours of the event(s) complained of.

d) Every attempt will be made to offer support for the child whilst at school and it is hoped that the school will provide an environment in which he/she can relax and spend the school day in complete confidence and safety.

e) **When deciding whether to make a referral**, following an allegation or suspicion of abuse, the Headmistress, as designated child protection officer **should not make her own decision over what appear to be borderline cases**, but rather the doubts and concerns should be discussed with the local authority designated officer (LADO). This may be done tentatively and without giving names in the first instance. What appears trivial at first can later be revealed to be much more serious, and an allegation of child abuse or neglect may lead to a criminal investigation. Thus the School **should not do anything that may jeopardise a police investigation**, such as asking a child leading questions **or attempting to investigate the allegations of abuse**.

f) In the event that the information given does appear to constitute abuse, the Headmistress, and only the Headmistress, will:

- i) make a formal report immediately by telephone to the Children, School and Families Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at the local divisional office. This is the office in the area of the child's residence.
- ii) without delay confirm the report in writing giving details of the case, the action taken and present situation.
- iii) in case of emergency, when medical advice or treatment is thought to be urgently needed, refer the pupil to the School Nurse.
- iv) be available to attend case conferences

f) The Headmistress will keep the Principals informed at all stages

### 7.3. PROCEDURE RELATING TO CHILD ABUSE ALLEGATIONS WITHIN THE SCHOOL

The remaining actions will only be made after consultation with the Social Services Department as in 7.2 e) above.

a) i) If the parent(s) or guardian(s) of the child are not the subject(s) of the complaint, they should be informed of the events. They need to be told of the school procedure if they are unaware of it. The permission should be sought for an immediate medical examination if the complaint is of a "physical type" (necessary as the child is under 16). Before a medical examination of the child is carried out the child should normally give his or her consent which may be given via a parent depending on the age of the child; this seeking of consent is the duty of the Medical Officer.

ii) If the parent(s) or guardian(s) are the subject of the complaint the child's permission should normally be sought for an immediate medical examination. The seeking of consent is the duty of the Medical Officer concerned.

b) i) Allegations against staff, volunteers or the designated person with responsibility for safeguarding should be immediately reported to the Headmistress. If the Headmistress is absent, the allegation should be passed to the Principals.

ii) If the complaint concerns a member of staff, a volunteer or a pupil, he or she should be informed as soon as possible after the result of the medical examination is known, if one is carried out. He or she should be told if a medical examination is not being carried out. He or she should not be invited to make a response, but should be warned that anything he or she says will be recorded.

Should the complaint be against the Headmistress (or in her absence the designated person for child protection) the member of staff receiving the allegation must immediately inform the Principals without notifying the Headmistress (or in her absence the designated person for child protection) first. The Deputy Head Academic will become the designated member of staff for child protection issues until the Principals are satisfied that the allegations concerning the Headmistress have no substance or, if otherwise, make alternative arrangements.

iii) The Headmistress will consult with the Principals and a decision should be taken whether or not the duty to report the matter to the Police has arisen. If the matter is reported to the Police, the member of staff or pupil should be suspended if not dismissed immediately under the terms of the disciplinary procedure. In case of serious harm, the police should be informed from the outset.

iv) At a later meeting, if the Principals and Headmistress are satisfied that the complaint is not well founded, either because the child retracts it or because the medical evidence impugns the child's veracity, then the member of the staff should be informed that the matter is now closed. Consideration should be given to the place of the child in the school.

v) If any person (whether employed, contracted, a volunteer or student) whose services are no longer used by the School because he or she is considered unsuitable to work with children, the School will make a report to the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA), within one month of the member of staff leaving the School. In this context, ceasing to use a person's services includes: dismissal; non-renewal of a fixed term contract; no longer engaging/refusing to engage a supply teacher provided by an employment agency; terminating the placement of a student teacher or other trainee; no longer using staff employed by contractors; no longer using volunteers; resignation, and voluntary withdrawal from supply teaching, contract working, a course of initial teacher training, or volunteering.

It is important that reports include as much evidence about the circumstances of the case as possible. (n.b. Failure to make a report constitutes an offence and the school may be removed from the DfES register of independent schools. )

c) The Headmistress, acting in loco parentis, may in certain circumstances (viz when a parent is the suspected abuser), and at the request of the statutory agencies – i.e. the Police or the Social Services Department, authorise arrangements (without prior parental agreement) for an interview to take place in school, or for a pupil to be removed for interview elsewhere.

d) Because bruising or other signs of injury may quickly begin to fade, expert diagnosis may need to be arranged urgently. The Designated Person, where the circumstances require it, must ensure that the social worker dealing with the case is properly informed so that the procedures regarding arrangements for a medical examination can be immediately applied.

e) The Designated Person must ensure that any member of staff involved make a record, as soon as possible, of details which may be required as evidence (e.g. what is said by the child, signs of injury), and that the relevant records are maintained, in strictest confidence. Information relating to actual, alleged or suspected child abuse is exempt from the provisions regarding the disclosure of pupil records.

f) The Designated Person, can expect to be invited to the initial case conference and to review meetings, and will normally be asked to provide written reports for these formal meetings. One of the main functions of the initial case conference is to agree what information can be given to the child's parents and by whom. In some circumstances it may also be appropriate for the Designated Person to be invited to the preliminary planning meeting.

j) The Designated Person must immediately pass on to the key worker or CP Co-ordinator (Social Services) information about significant changes affecting a child on the CP Register.

#### 7.4. THE ROLE OF THE HEADMISTRESS

a) The named person at Devonshire House Preparatory School, who is the Child Protection Co-ordinator, is the Headmistress; however she may delegate this responsibility to the Deputy Head Academic in some circumstances.

b) After consultation with the member of staff reporting a concern or allegation of abuse, the Headmistress may decide to ask further questions of, for example, the child's form teacher or the relevant Deputy Head. The Headmistress will let the reporting member of staff be aware of this and they should be aware that they may be called to further conferences either within the school or with the local authority Child Protection Unit. It is essential that the information disclosed to the Headmistress remains confidential. If she feels that there are other members of staff who need to be aware of the school's concerns then she will give them the necessary information.

c) If more information needs to be obtained from other teaching staff, then the Headmistress will make the approach. The precise nature of how this is done will depend on the severity of the situation, but it is of the utmost importance that confidentiality is maintained.

d) If more information needs to be obtained from another child then this should not generally be done without discussion with social services. In exceptional circumstances the Headmistress may question a child, but only in the presence of another adult with whom the child feels comfortable.

## 8.1. SAFE RECRUITMENT – PERMANENT STAFF

When staff are recruited to work with children in the School:

(n.b. The School does not employ adult volunteers, but if volunteers were to work in the School then the following procedures should be followed)

### a) ADVERTISING THE VACANCY

The advertised vacancy should include the words:

Devonshire House Preparatory School is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This post is subject to Enhanced Criminal Records Bureau Disclosure.

### b) INFORMATION TO CANDIDATES

The information should clearly set out the School's commitment to safeguarding children in the job description and the postholders' responsibility to promoting and safeguarding welfare of pupils.

It must be explained that the post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974.

### c) APPLICATION FORM

The candidates must sign a declaration that:

I understand that this post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 and if appointed I will need an Enhanced Certificate of Disclosure from the CRB, and I am content that such a check is carried out. I have no previous convictions, cautions or bindovers or cases outstanding and no current entry on list 99, or other disqualification. (If you have any concerns about this or any outstanding cases you may attach a letter to the Headmistress marked 'Confidential' with your application.) I understand any appointment can only be confirmed once a CRB certificate and references are received that are satisfactory to the School.

### d) INTERVIEWS

Candidates should bring original documents with them including passport or driving licence and qualifications, so that their correct identity can be clearly verified.

Any gaps in employment history must be queried and satisfactory answers must be obtained. A request for verification should be considered.

Questions regarding Safeguarding Children should be asked at the interview.

### e) REFERENCES

The School's reference form should be used to obtain references and this includes specific requests for information on any concerns about the candidate's suitability to work with children. References 'to whom it may concern' are not acceptable. Whenever possible the Headmistress should speak to the referee in person

### f) OVERSEAS STAFF

If an applicant has trained and worked in the UK and then worked abroad, before appointment that applicant must have a CRB check initiated by the school. In addition, the applicant should provide a similar certificate from the countries where he or she has been living.

## 8.2. SAFE RECRUITMENT – SUPPLY OR TEMPORARY STAFF

Supply staff, whether teaching or other, must have a CRB certificate initiated by their 'employment business' (the supply agency), and an assurance to the school that the requisite checks have been completed must be obtained before the member of staff arrives at School. A separate identity check must be conducted by the school. If the CRB certificate contains 'disclosed information', a copy must be received by the school. The School must only use a reputable supply agency which has rigorous employment procedures.

Temporary staff should not be employed unless:

- Their identity is checked with a passport or driving licence
- Their address is verified through a utility bill or bank account
- A clear List 99 (or currently recommended agency) check is obtained.

Temporary staff details are recorded on the central staff register.

## 8.3. SAFE RECRUITMENT – CONTRACT STAFF

All contract staff (i.e. caterers and cleaners) must have clear CRB certificate if they are working at the School during the hours when the children are present. If application has been made for a CRB check, but the certificate has not yet been received, the onus is on the Headmistress to ensure that such staff do not pose a risk to children. Such staff must not start work until they have received a satisfactory List 99 check (see above).

Catering and cleaning staff details are recorded on the central staff register.

## 8.4 OFFENCES RELATED TO THE INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARDING AUTHORITY (ISA) REQUIREMENTS

From 12 October 2009, it is an **offence** under the Vetting and Barring Scheme (VBS) legislation:

(i) to **knowingly** employ (or take on as a volunteer) in an ISA regulated activity someone who is barred from such activity.

(ii) not to refer to the ISA details of anyone who is removed from regulated activity, or who leaves while under investigation for allegedly causing harm or posing a risk of harm.

(iii) From 1 November 2010, when ISA registration becomes mandatory for new entrants and movers, it will be a **criminal offence**, with severe penalties:

- to work in an ISA regulated activity role without being ISA registered;
- not to check that potential new employees or volunteers are ISA registered.

Barring decisions by the ISA from 20th January 2009 have exactly the same effect as a Secretary of State bar on grounds of unsuitability to work with children made before 20 January 2009 and will be included on the Protection of Children Act List (PoCA) or on List 99. However, the ISA will not provisionally bar a person while considering a referral. Therefore it is even more important for the School to take up references and look into career history, to ensure that it is known why a job applicant left previous employment. Should the School check against List 99 or PoCA, this check will also cover people barred by the ISA from 20th January 2009 onwards, as well as those barred by the Secretary of State. Where qualified teachers are registered with the General Teaching Council (GTC), misconduct referrals (that is, those which are not child-protection related) must go to the GTC.

## 9. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

a) The Designated person for dealing with child protection issues in the Foundation Stage will be the Headmistress. As she does not specifically work with EYFS children, in certain circumstances she may delegate elements of this responsibility to the Junior School Deputy Head or the Early Years Coordinator who may be better known to the child concerned. The Headmistress, or in her absence the Deputy Head Academic, will always be present at any parental or interagency meetings.

(ii) The Headmistress will inform Ofsted of any allegations of serious harm or abuse by any person living, working, or looking after EYFS children at the premises (whether that allegation relates to harm or abuse committed on the premises or elsewhere), or any other abuse which is alleged to have taken place on the premises, and of the action taken in respect of these allegations;

(iii) The Headmistress will inform Ofsted of the above, as soon as is reasonably practicable, but at the latest within 14 days.

## 10. MONITORING AND REVIEW

a) Children who have been suspected of abuse are kept on a register by the Headmistress. Their welfare is reviewed regularly.

b) In order to maintain the effectiveness of this policy, the Headmistress will ensure:

(i) training (updated every two years) in child protection and inter-agency working for the designated person(s);

(ii) training in child protection (updated every three years) for all staff, and indicate that part-time and voluntary staff who work with children are to be made aware of the arrangements;

(iii) new staff, who have not been in post for the training sessions, will have this policy and training should be arranged when possible

(iv) any deficiencies or weaknesses in child protection arrangements are remedied without delay;

(v) undertake an annual review of the school's child protection policies and procedures and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged.

SP

Sept 2011

(prev policy last updated Sep 10)

Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA)  
PO Box 181, Darlington DL1 9FA (tel 0300 123 1111).

Camden Safeguarding Children Board  
Unit 6/7 Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD  
Telephone: 020 7974 6666, Fax: 020 7974 6708  
Email: [Terry.Ellis@camden.gov.uk](mailto:Terry.Ellis@camden.gov.uk)



	This Policy is the responsibility of the Headmistress and is regularly reviewed by the Principals..	Date written: 7 <sup>th</sup> September 2011
	Signed:..... Headmistress	Date:.....
	Principal's Signature:.....	Date:.....
	To be reviewed:	September 2012



APPENDIX  
 Child Protection Training

Mrs Stephanie Piper – Designated Child Protection Officer:

Designated Person – Kidscape March 2011  
 Safeguarding training – AMP training April 2010

Deputy Head Academic  
 – Designated Person Workshop – Camden

Whole School

Staff joining between these sessions can also attend Camden training sessions and all discuss the details of the School's Policy with the Headmistress.


Training by Camden.

Sept 2004 – Child Protection training

Sept 2007 – Multi Agency work on Safeguarding training

April 2010 – Safeguarding training

Policy Implementation

	<p>This Policy is the responsibility of the Headmistress, in consultation with the Principals.</p>	<p>Date reviewed:          26<sup>th</sup> January 2011</p>
	<p>Signed:.....</p>	<p>Date:.....</p>
	<p>To be reviewed:</p>	<p>September 2011</p>